

Cunningham, chancellor, Sheldon Ekland-Olson, dean, college of liberal arts, Bernard Rapoport, chairman, board of regents, and Nikole Bell, stu-

dent, University of Texas at Austin. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks at a Luncheon in Dallas, Texas

October 16, 1995

Thank you very much. Lloyd Bentsen already said this, but I want to reemphasize that in my opinion, when the history of our administration has been written, even those who disagreed with a lot of things I did will say that, unquestionably, Al Gore was the most important and influential Vice President in the history of the United States of America. No other person has been given so much responsibility, and no other person has fulfilled it so well, whether it was in the reinventing Government movement or in setting environmental and technology policy or dealing with our attempts to work more closely with the Russians across a wide range of issues—and I tell you now there are no Russian missiles pointed at the people of the United States for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age because of the things that we've been doing—or working with Secretary Cisneros on our community empowerment strategy. Right across the board he has made a terrific difference, and besides that, he gives great introductions. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Frank and Debbie for doing such a wonderful job, along with all of you on the steering committee. Thank you very, very much.

I thank Secretary Bentsen for being here, for his remarks and for his remarkable service to our country. This country has had very, very few Treasury Secretaries in its long and distinguished history that have had anything like the impact that Lloyd Bentsen had on the economic policy of the United States, as you can see from what others have said about the statistics, to very, very good effect. And a lot of the things we had to do were not easy at the time. I'll say a little more about that in a moment. But I want to say thank you, and I miss you.

I look around this room and I see some people in this room, like my dear friend B. Rapoport who spoke with me at the University of Texas this morning, and Jess Hay and Audrey

and Betty Jo, people I've known more than 20 years and others that I just met since I have been running for or become President. Perhaps there are a few people here I have never met before. I'm going to try to correct that before I leave this office—all over the country. But I want to thank all of you for coming here, and I hope you're coming here in common cause.

This is a remarkable day for our country. In Washington, DC, there may be as many as one million black men actually marching even as we speak here today. And they are doing it, I believe, for the same reasons and based on the same values that the people of Dallas elected Ron Kirk the mayor. They are saying that we have to do two things in this country: We have to see people who are in difficult circumstances reassert their own discipline and dedication to personal responsibility for themselves, their families, and their communities; and then we have to bridge this foolish racial divide that continues to plague us, even 30 years after President Johnson saw through the passage of the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act, because we tend to see the world so differently through our different experiences and lenses. And that's what I went to the University of Texas to talk about today. I don't want to reiterate what I said there, except to say that I think there is fault on both sides and merit on both sides.

I think that the better part of wisdom now is to do two things, first of all, to really have every citizen seek out someone of a different racial or ethnic group and engage in the kind of conversations people think they have but don't really, in which people can be frank and brutally honest about what they honestly feel but in which they have the discipline to listen and open their ears and their minds and their hearts and hear others. I find so often in Washington, DC, perhaps especially in Washington, DC, people say a lot, but they don't listen very

well. And I've taken to calling the Speaker of the House once a week and just trying to listen, whether I need to or not—[laughter]—just because I think that it's important for us to listen to one another, for people of different views to actually hear and be able to say what someone on the other side of an issue really believes.

The second thing I think we have to do is to follow people like your mayor or our wonderful Secretary of Housing and Urban Development who actually bring people together to get things done.

I'm deeply indebted to Texas for so many reasons, for Lloyd Bentsen and Henry Cisneros and, of course, for Bill White, who until recently was the Deputy Secretary of Energy. And my lifetime friend Mr. McLarty has a car dealership in Texarkana. I don't know if that counts or not, but I think it does. [Laughter] We're still trying to sell Ross Perot down there. [Laughter]

We've tried to work hard with the people of Texas, and one thing that I've been really proud of is the support that we've been able to maintain through both Congresses—one in Democratic hands, one in Republican hands—for the space program, something that I strongly support and believe in, and the Vice President does as well. And I thank the Members of the Congress who are here for representing Texas so well and for helping us to move this country forward.

I'd like to—there's hardly anything left for me to say because everybody who's spoken before did so well. And maybe I ought to sit down while I'm ahead. But what I'd like to do today is just to make a few points that I hope you can make to others in the days and weeks and months ahead, because I think the election in 1996 and the budget debate we are having now in 1995 will shape the kind of people we're going to be well into the 21st century.

Let me begin by saying that I am very upbeat about where we are and where we're going, not only because the economic news—although it's good; we do have the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation we've had in 25 years, and I'm proud of the work that everyone did on that. Of course, there's still things to be done. We're going through a period of profound change from an industrial to a technology-based, information-based economy, from the cold war to a global village. And whenever these kind of big changes happen and the shakeout

is occurring, there are a lot of people who kind of fall behind, and we have to catch them up.

We have to not only create jobs, we have to figure out how to raise incomes. That's why we are trying, even in this Congress, to pass the "GI bill" for America's workers that would permit people who lose their jobs to get a voucher from the Federal Government to take to the nearest community college to immediately begin job training. That's why we want the tax cut to emphasize giving families a deduction for the cost of education after high school, so people can continue to strengthen their ability to earn good incomes.

But basically, this economy is going in the right direction. And the most important thing is that we permit those of you in the private sector to succeed by following good, sound policies on the deficit, on trade, on investment in education, on research and development, on technology, on helping the communities that have been left behind to attract investment and to put people to work.

The Vice President talked about our successes on the social front. There is a real reawakening today. What you see in this march in Washington is really not confined, by any means, to black men, or black men and black women. What is going on today in Washington is a manifestation of a sweeping feeling in the country that the time has come for everyone to assume a higher measure of personal responsibility, to try to come to grips with the incredible dimensions of the social problems that we have allowed to foster and fester in this country over the last generation.

And I believe our policies have played a role. I believe our welfare reform policies, I believe our crime bill, I believe a lot of the things we have done have played a role. But the American people are leading the way to bring the crime rate down. The welfare rolls are down. The food stamp rolls are down. The poverty rate is down. The teen pregnancy rate is down in America.

Now, they're all still too high, every one of them. But the point is that we are at least gaining on it for a change. And what we need to do is to keep gaining on it. There will be problems in this old world as long as people like you and me inhabit the planet because we're not perfect. But the issue is, are we gaining on it, are we getting closer every day to living by the values we believe in, to lifting up the

potential of every person, to giving everybody the chance to be the kind of person that they ought to be? The answer is, we are. And what we ought to do is to continue that.

We still have some troubling problems. For example—can you explain this—drug use is down among young adults, but casual drug use is up among juveniles. The crime rate is down among young adults, but random crime is up among juveniles. Why? We're gaining on it, but there's still too many kids out there raising themselves. And we have to keep working on that.

We know now that we can make progress. For years, I heard people talk about social problems in almost hopeless terms. Now we know we can do something about this. And now there is no excuse for our not doing it. But we can do this.

There is a lot of talk—I don't want to be too political today, but we all know every time I come to Texas a hundred of my friends say, "You know, if you just spend more time down here, we could carry this State." Then I leave, and all the Republicans say, "Oh, you know, he's just another one of those Democratic liberals." And I hate to say it, but every one of them that wants to replace me, except one or two, has spent a whole lot more time in Washington, DC, in the last 20 years than I have. [Laughter]

But next time you hear that, ask them, of the last three administrations which one reduced the deficit more, which was the only one to produce a balanced budget, which one reduced the size of the Government, the number of regulations more, which one gave more authority to State and local governments and the private sector and reduced it from the Government, which one passed the toughest crime bill? The answer to all of that, obviously, is our administration.

I say that not to be political myself but to say that the political attacks on this administration may be helpful at election time, but they actually cause a lot of voters to do something that's not in their own interests. And sometimes the conventional wisdom just kind of gets a leg up and people just keep on repeating it. So I want you to go out and help refute the conventional wisdom, not because I think anything I've done in the past justifies reelection—I think people should be reelected based on what's going to happen in the future—but because it

is evidence of the values this administration has and the record of performance we will make if we continue into the future.

And you should confront people. You should talk to people. Just in the way I want us to bridge the racial divide, we have to bridge the political divide. The thing I think that surprised me most when I got to Washington was how intensely partisan the place was and how people got away with doing that. Because mostly in a State capital around the country or in a city hall, you'd just collapse; people would just get rid of you if you were so intensely partisan you never worked with anybody else. You'd never do anything else.

And it's one of the reasons we had to make some tough decisions. I'll just give you one. Lloyd Bentsen will vouch for me on this. When I went to Washington, I knew from talking to Alan Greenspan and a lot of economic experts that if we could get the deficit down at least \$500 billion over 5 years, we'd have a big drop in interest rates and a big boom in the economy—we knew that—and that the \$500 billion, as Secretary Bentsen said to me over and over and over again, was sort of a psychological barrier. If we could just get by it, boy, we could get this economy going again. So we decided that come hell or high water, that's exactly what we were going to do.

And after I'd been in Washington about a week, I was informed by the then minority leaders of the Senate and House, now the Senate majority leader and the Speaker, it didn't matter what I did, I would not get one single, solitary Republican vote for deficit reduction for my budget. And one of them was candid enough to say, "It's great because this is a free thing for us. If it works, we'll deny that it worked and claim it's a tax increase. If it doesn't, we can blame you. You won't get any votes from us, not one." And they were as good as their word. They didn't have a single one for it. [Laughter]

Now what did that mean? Since—and you ask your Members of the House here. What it meant was, since we had to pass the budget with only Democrats and we had to reduce the deficit \$500 billion, we had to raise taxes on a lot of you more than we wanted to, and we had to cut spending less. In the end, Lloyd Bentsen said, "We have to do this because all the people that pay more in taxes will make even more in income if we get this economy

going again.” And so we did it. He didn’t want to do it. I didn’t want to do it. We wound up with a budget that was not ideal but was still right for America in an intensely partisan atmosphere.

I had never been in anything like that before, and I still think it’s not good for America. I think there’s enough differences between Republicans and Democrats to run 500 elections, much less just this one coming up in 1996. So there ought to be some argument for just getting up tomorrow and trying to work something out so the country’s interest will be served and still let people make their decisions. That is what I am committed to doing. But I am not, I am not going to do anything as President that I believe will make the America of the 21st century, that the children that are here in this luncheon today will grow up and live in, less than it ought to be. That’s what this whole budget debate is about.

Don’t let anyone tell you this is a debate about balancing the budget. Every outside credible source says both these budget plans are good plans to balance the budget. Every one. Every one. Our plan gets a balanced budget in 9 years; theirs does in 7. Our plan has a smaller tax cut more targeted toward education and childrearing. Our plan uses conservative economic forecasts that are consistent with our historic performance, even though we’re going to grow more, I think, if we do this right.

But their plan, I believe, violates our most basic values. I believe this is really a contrast between those who really think that winner-take-all is all right, let the market decide everything, and those of us who believe that America is a place where everybody ought to have a chance to win. It’s a contrast between a plan that is committed to growing the middle class and shrinking the under class and a plan that would certainly shrink the middle class and grow the under class. That’s not the 21st century I want to live in. It’s a contrast between a plan that would continue to honor our obligations to our parents and to our children, especially the poorest children among us, and one that would say that’s somebody else’s problem. That is the difference.

Everybody knows we have to slow the rate of growth in medical care. But their plan would impose great new burdens on some of the poorest elderly people in this country. They would say to all of these people out there living on

\$300 or \$400 a month that you have to pay more for your Medicare and Medicaid, even if you can’t afford to pay it. They would say to medical centers and urban hospitals that we’re going to cut way back on your Medicaid payments, and we hope you don’t have to close, but if you do, it’s too bad.

We have to slow the rate of medical inflation, but we have to do it in a disciplined way so that we understand the consequences to the University of Texas Medical Center, to the urban hospitals throughout Texas, to the rural hospitals that provide the only health care people have out in the country, and to elderly people, many of whom barely have enough to live on, not to mention the fact that 1 in 5 children today—more than 1 in 5, 22 percent, are eligible for help from the National Government to deal with their health care needs. And they’re our children, too, not just the kids that can afford to be at a luncheon like this because their parents have done well. But they’re our children, too, and they’re our future, too. And we owe them something.

So, yes, I propose to slow the rate of medical inflation, but I don’t want us to go plumb off the side of a mountain before we know where we’re going. It is not prudent, and it is not consistent with our values.

I don’t support one incredible provision of that budget of theirs which would actually raise taxes on families making about \$20,000 a year with two kids by cutting back on the working families tax credit, a credit signed into law under President Ford, a credit expanded under President Bush, a credit President Reagan said was the best antipoverty program ever devised because all it does is to cut taxes and give tax credits to working people who don’t have enough money, even though they work full-time, to get above the poverty line because they’ve got kids at home.

And Lloyd Bentsen and I designed a program that, over a period of years, would enable the United States of America to say, if you will work 40 hours a week and you have children in your house, you will not be taxed into poverty by your Government; your Government will lift you out of poverty. We want people to work, not be on welfare. And we want people to be successful when they’re doing their best to work and raise their children. Why in the world we would do that is beyond me.

I don't think it's smart to cut back on our environmental investments. The Vice President could have told you, but he's too modest to say this. He told me, the first time I ever met him, that all this scientific dispute about whether the globe was warming up was bogus, that it really was, and we were going to be in trouble. Just a couple of weeks ago, we see a whole new raft of scientific evidence and almost unanimity of opinion now that global warming is real, that there is a hole in the ozone layer that is going to affect the whole future of the planet, including the future of the United States. I don't believe eliminating the modest amount of money we invest in studying global warming and what our response ought to be to it is a very good way to balance the budget.

And at a time—we just came to the University of Texas, which every Texan is proud of—I don't think on the edge of the 21st century there's a single business person in this audience who would knowingly cut a corporate budget for education and training, research and development, or technology. The idea that we would consider on the edge of the 20th century cutting back our investment in helping poor kids get off to a good start in school or providing scholarships and loans to people going to college is a mystery to me, since we don't have to do any of that to balance the budget. And you don't have to take my word for it, ask Lloyd Bentsen. We do not have to do any of that to balance the budget.

So don't be fooled. This fight over the balanced budget—when you see your Representatives go back to Washington, it is not about

balancing the budget. We can balance the budget, cut taxes, protect Medicare without destroying the social contract and forgetting about our obligations to one another. That is what this is about.

So I ask you to leave here doing two things: One, go out and talk to people who are different from you, just like I asked the people at the University of Texas today, tell them what you heard here and listen to what they think; two, tell the people of Texas we can balance the budget without stepping on our values and trampling on our future and walking away from our obligations to one another.

And that is what we are determined to do. I go back to Washington with that determination because I believe that we're going in the right direction economically, we're going in the right direction socially, we are better positioned for the next century than any country on the face of the Earth, if we will simply face up to our responsibilities and deal with them with common sense and good values instead of turning them into some sort of ideological fight that will tear the American people apart. I want to bring us together and move us forward.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. in the Plaza Ballroom at Le Meridien Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Debbie and Frank Branson, luncheon cochairs; Bernard Rapoport, chairman, board of regents, University of Texas, and his wife, Audrey; and Democratic fundraiser Jess Hay and his wife, Betty Jo.

Remarks at the Concert For Hope in Hollywood, California *October 16, 1995*

Thank you very much. Thank you, Joe Califano, for your singular determination to keep this issue before the American people. There is not another citizen in the entire United States of America who has done as much as Joe Califano to help us all to come to grips with the implications of substance abuse. And every American is in his debt.

I also want to thank the other honorees for the work they have done, the late Frank Wells

and Tony Bennett and our friend Betty Ford. I want to thank the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia for helping us all to learn more about this, and all the performers tonight for making this a very special evening for the United States.

This mission of ours cuts across politics, geography, income, and race. It must unite all of our people in a common purpose. Tonight in 3,500 cities and towns all across our beloved